

MEETING SUMMARY

Focus Macomb Transportation Committee

**Anderson, Eckstein & Westrick -- Conference Room
24668 Hall Road
Clinton Township, Michigan**

June 20, 2006

Members Present:

Anthony Viviano, President, Sterling Heights Dodge
Lillian Adams, Executive Director, Sterling/Utica/Shelby Twp. Chamber
Benjamin Aloia, President, Aloia & Associates
Gina Cavaliere, Director, Warren DDA/TIFA
Maura Cook, DaimlerChrysler Corporation
Dan Dirks, General Manager, SMART
Fran Gillet, Commissioner, Macomb County Road Commission
David Lakin, Vice-President, Spalding DeDecker Associates
Pat Lehman, Retired Director Community Relations
Ralph Maccarone, Supervisor, Shelby Township
Vic Martin, President, Best Western Sterling Inn
Roy Rose, President, Anderson, Eckstein and Westrick ~ Focus Macomb Co-Chair
Bill Westrick, Principal Engineer, Anderson, Eckstein & Westrick

Macomb County Planning and Economic Development Staff Present:

John Crumm, Program Manager, Planning and Environmental Services, Transportation Committee Advisor
Jason Friedmann, Senior Planner
Justin Robinson, Associate Planner
John Paul Rae, Intern
Alison Mace, Intern

Guest Speakers

Dan Dirks, General Manager, SMART
Gerry Rowe, Manager, Transportation Program, SEMCOG
Greg Johnson, Head Engineer, MDOT Metro Region

Members Not Present:

Anthony Lombardo, President, Lombardo Companies
Jesse Berger, President, Berger & Sons
Doug Brown, ASTI Environmental
Michael Deyak, CFO, Premier Financial Credit Union
Ed Hoover, Business Representative, Rizzo Services
Richard Ives, Vice-President, John Carlo, Inc.
Marilyn Lane, President, Lane Development
Robert Milewski, President & CEO, Mt. Clemens General Hospital
Gregory L. Windingland, Development Coordinator, Lombardo Companies

THE MEETING WAS BROUGHT TO ORDER AT 3:35 P.M. by Co-Chair, Anthony Viviano who told the committee, "We have a challenge before us but not an impossible task."

PRESENTATION – GERRY ROWE, SEMCOG

Gerry Rowe, Transportation Manager of SEMCOG, explained the role the organization plays in coordinating and planning transportation improvements. The organization has 155 members from 234 units of government in its seven

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county member area. In 2004, SEMCOG's General Assembly adopted the *2030 Regional Transportation Plan for Southeast Michigan (RTP)*, in anticipation of the needs of the counties it serves and the resources available. "SEMCOG estimates it will take more than \$70 billion to address all transportation needs between now and 2030 – repaving every road, fixing every bridge, alleviating congestion, correcting safety problems, developing a more comprehensive non-motorized system, implementing the regional transit plan, and operating the current road and transit systems. At the same time, the region is estimated to receive only \$40 billion for road and transit projects from federal, state, and local resources – leaving a \$30 billion shortfall."¹ "The members have now approved the 2030 Preferred Alternative, which, "consists of distinct transportation policies and initiatives designed to guide further progress toward achieving stated goals and objectives and ultimately enhance our regional transportation system."²

➤ **Key Messages of the Plan.**

- **Auto's aren't bad, but over-dependence on them is.** People need to have a choice. We must provide service for users who do not own or have access to motor vehicles as well as an option for riders who do have a choice.
- **Needs driven.** The plan meets our goal of moving people and goods efficiently in our region. We believe that needs of the corridor should drive the mode in that corridor.
- **Cost effective.** The plan looks at immediate needs for improvement and what makes sense for SE Michigan's travel patterns. We must provide service that our citizens are willing to pay for, not necessarily what works for other parts of the country.

➤ **Summary of Recommendations.**

- **Three-tiered Service.** Based on analysis of needs, SEMCOG suggests a three-tiered service for SE Michigan:
 - 1) High use corridors need rapid transit. Rapid transit is recommended on 12 regional corridors covering 259 miles and needing about 265 stations.
 - 2) Upgrade existing bus service.
 - 3) Expand existing community transit coverage; improve service.
- **Other Recommendations.**
 - 1) Regional links are needed from the tri-county urban area to the other urban areas of Ann Arbor, Port Huron, Howell, and Monroe. SEMCOG recommends express bus service be considered for immediate use on all regional link corridors and are exploring the option of using passenger rail service as a commuter link between Ann Arbor and Metro Detroit.
 - 2) The Plan incorporates an ongoing study of rapid transit on Woodward Ave., Downtown Detroit to Metro Airport, and Detroit to Lansing.
 - 3) Amenities impact people's decision to use rapid transit. SEMCOG has recommended the following: safety and security; station features; physical accessibility; accessibility for people with special needs; easy-to-understand information; attractive vehicles; snow removal; and use of Intelligent Transportation System technology.

PRESENTATION BY DAN DIRKS, SMART

Dan Dirks, General Manager of SMART and a member of the MC Planning Commission told the committee that SMART has been doing extremely well in SE Michigan since its reorganization in the 1990's. Supported by a 0.3 mileage, SMART has 280 large buses covering the second most dispersed area in the country with 80% of the jobs ten miles or more from our downtown area; SMART ranks first in the nation with its small buses numbering 350. Two-

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thirds of the patrons live in the City of Detroit or the surrounding ring cities, working at entry-level jobs in the suburbs. Another major group of riders are senior citizens and the disabled who are able to remain in their homes and access SMART for their transportation needs. The biggest impact to SMART will occur over the next ten to thirty years, as baby-boomers begin to retire and yet remain independent. SMART is working with other agencies to plan for the increasing transportation needs of this group of the population.

PRESENTATION BY GREG JOHNSON, MDOT

Greg Johnson, Head Engineer, MDOT, explained to the group the agency's vision of transportation in Macomb County is of both integrated and smart transportation. Having just celebrated its 100th Anniversary, MDOT's rich history includes having build the first freeway in the country. Today with over 10,000 miles of roadways, bridges and other structures it is responsible for in the State, the agency no longer believes it can build its way out of congestion. Rather it is working on methods to make our roadways and roadsides *smart* to adjust to the flow of traffic, advise alternate routes, and identify areas for repair and dispatch repair crews while they maintain MDOT's new philosophy that expanding roads does not alleviate congestion.

ADJOURNMENT

Stephen Cassin, Executive Director of MC Planning and Economic Development spoke to the committee about an ongoing study undertaken to assess the feasibility of the County acquiring the Romeo Airport. The speaker for the next Transportation meeting will discuss the airport with the members. The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.,

¹ *A Summary of the 2030 Regional Transportation Plan for Southeast Michigan*, SEMCOG Information Services, Detroit, Michigan, p. 2.

² *A Summary of the 2030 Regional Transportation Plan for Southeast Michigan*, SEMCOG Information Services, Detroit, Michigan, p. 3.

Supporting and Informative Handouts:

A Citizen's Guide to Transportation Planning in Southeast Michigan (How to get involved in the process), SEMCOG Information Services, Detroit, Michigan, 2nd Edition (October 2005).

FY 2006-2008 Transportation Improvement Program for Southeast Michigan (For Macomb County 6/20/2006), SEMCOG Information Services, Detroit, Michigan.

Improving Transit in Southeast Michigan: A Framework for Action Summary, SEMCOG Information Services, Detroit, Michigan, July 2001.

SEMScope, SEMCOG Information Services, Detroit, Michigan, Spring 2006 edition.